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COORDINATION QUESTIONS

Communication for development programmes in the United Nations system

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Communication for development programmes in the United Nations system" (JIU/REP/94/8).

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ANNEX

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COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

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Joint Inspection Unit

Geneva
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Contents

	Paragraphs	Page
Acronyms		iv
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS		v
Introduction	1 - 7	1
I. THE IMPORTANCE AND SCOPE OF THE FIELD OF COMMUNICATION	8 - 43	4
A. Principal ways of conveying public information	12 - 14	5
B. Types of communication	15 - 43	6
II. EXISTING INTER-AGENCY COMMUNICATION MECHANISM	44 - 125	13
A. The role of UNESCO: Communication, Information and Informatics	49 - 62	14
B. Agencies' need for communication and co-ordination	63 - 96	17
C. Informal Network: Round Table Conferences on Communication for Development	97 - 101	23
D. Analysis of the Round Tables	102 - 107	24
E. Analysis of problems of co-operation and co-ordination at the inter-agency level	108 - 125	25
III. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE ACTIONS ON THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE	126 - 132	29
A. Conclusions on the Round Table Conference	126 - 131	29
B. Future Actions to be considered by agencies during the 5th Round Table Conference on Communication for Development	132	30
Annex		
The following conclusions can be drawn from the replies to the questionnaire sent to 15 United Nations specialized agencies, out of which 10 responded	1 - 11	31
Notes		33

Acronyms

ACC	Administrative Committee on Co-ordination
ATRCW	African Training and Research Centre for Women
BPPE	Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation
CII	Communication, Information and Informatics
CPC	Committee for Programme and Co-ordination
DHA	Department of Humanitarian Affairs
DPKO	Department of Peace-Keeping Operations
DSC	Development Support Communication
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
IIP	Inter-governmental Informatics Programme
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IPDC	International Programme for the Development of Communication
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IMO	International Maritime Organization
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
JUNIC	Joint United Nations Information Committee
NGOs	Non-governmental Organizations
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PGI	General Information Programme
PPCO	Policy and Programme Co-ordination Office
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNDPI	United Nations Department of Public Information
UNDCP	United Nations Drug Control Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WID	Women-in-Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In today's world, more than ever before, the United Nations system has been given responsibilities in the field of development, humanitarian assistance in general and in connection with peace-keeping operations. The world has become more interdependent today than in the past, thus necessitating an efficient communication system to inform and alert the international community about the efforts being made by organizations of the United Nations system to meet the ever-increasing challenge in the above mentioned areas. It would, therefore, be difficult to under-estimate the importance of communication, and the need for intensified inter-agency co-operation in the field of communication for development. The most significant event in this context is the recent General Assembly document on "DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION - An agenda for development" (A/48/935 of 6 May 1994), in which the Secretary-General calls the attention of Member States on the importance of an issue more than ever crucial for the safeguard of peace and security.

At present, the situation regarding communication activities in the United Nations system is not satisfactory, nor is the level of inter-agency co-ordination keeping up with the evolution of communication discipline. In Article III.3 and Article V.5 of Resolution 4/21 of the UNESCO General Conference, and Resolution 34/182 adopted by the United Nations 34th General Assembly, the International Programme for the Development of Communication has been given the mission to work with specialized agencies and professional organizations on projects for the development of communication and their funding. But while all specialized agencies are invited to the Council meetings, few have actively participated and the far-reaching questions of inter-agency co-operation have not yet been addressed adequately. Nor is there any such forum to discuss the dimensions of communication in humanitarian assistance. It has been generally recognized that the mass media have not been sufficiently brought to bear on the extensive activities of the United Nations system in the field of development, implementation of projects and their impact on the quality of lives of recipients.

The reality of a world in rapid, constant evolution has put into perspective the strategic value of communication, especially dissemination of information and sharing of knowledge. Furthermore, to be effective communication must be a two-way process involving both dispensers and beneficiaries of information. It should lead to a consensus likely to satisfy the interest, needs and potentialities of all concerned. Social and economic factors properly emphasized become indispensable ingredients of any methods or techniques employed in development communication.

After a thorough research, analysis and interviews by the Inspector, the findings indicate that communication for development programmes do not feature as a priority theme for most of the agencies, with the exception of UNESCO, UNICEF and FAO. UNICEF considers communication for development programmes as a priority. They have communication officers in almost all their field offices, most

of them with very substantial programmes. The most significant lacuna in the development machinery of the United Nations system is that the UNDP modalities of project execution do not provide scope for a communication dimension.

There is, however, awareness and concern among United Nations agencies, universities, multilateral agencies and NGOs about the need for effective communication structures for attaining the desired objectives of development and humanitarian assistance programmes. Initiatives have been taken to put more emphasis on communication as a prerequisite for development. One of these initiatives was to organize a Round Table Conference whereby useful discussions could take place on how to make communication programmes more effective as well as how to co-ordinate the efforts of the different agencies to this effect.

While the above efforts at the headquarters level need to be commended and encouraged, the findings of the Inspector also indicate that most of the agencies seem to attach insufficient importance to communication in operational activities. Left to the initiative of the chief technical advisor of the project, communication is rarely integrated into the entire cycle of development assistance.

Some aspects of the problem of communication for development received limited recognition and attempts are being made to find suitable solutions. The structure for an efficient communication system for humanitarian assistance, in connection with the peace-keeping processes, however, is still at the rudimentary stage. The possibility of expanding the inter-agency round table conference on communication for development, to include communication for humanitarian assistance and peace-keeping operations should be considered. Through this report, the Inspector attempts to raise the opportunity for reflection on the present policies of organizations of the United Nations system dealing with communication for development, and makes the following ten recommendations as ways and means of improving the status of communication.

Recommendation 1 - Policy decisions and provision of resources for communication

in recognition of the fact that communication is a prerequisite for any programme of the United Nations system to succeed:

(a) the policy of communication should be integrated within each department of an agency dealing with development and humanitarian assistance; and

(b) the budgets of all the projects and programmes should contain a specific provision for communication activities.

Recommendation 2 - Location of Communication Units

The major role of communication in the United Nations system is to help programme managers to make their work understood primarily within their own organization, secondly among the sister agencies and most important of all by the beneficiaries. The task of information divisions is to disseminate information about the activities of the United Nations organizations. There is thus a clear distinction between the two disciplines. The present situation whereby communication units are located within the Information Division, with the exception of UNICEF where the Programme Communication and Social Mobilization Unit is located within the Programme division rather than the Information Division, diminishes the importance of communication, which is not exclusively public information. Communication units, therefore, should enjoy a certain autonomy and have direct functional relations with the various organizational offices dealing with field activities.

Recommendation 3 - Resources

Donor agencies should be invited to provide adequate resources to support and expand communication activities, in particular for participatory development initiatives.

Recommendation 4 - Co-ordination

In order to improve co-ordination in the area of communication by the organizations of the United Nations system, in particular those involved with development, action has to be taken on two levels: headquarters and country.

(a) **Headquarters:** An internal mechanism such as focal points, should be established whereby departments would inform each other about the work done on communication in their respective units. In addition, since communication is a management process, it has to be part of all undertakings. There should be a unit within the policy-making division of agencies which would assume the responsibility of co-ordinating communication activities. The same unit should be the link at the inter-agency level.

(b) **Country level:** Co-ordination at the country level should be practical and flexible in order to respond to "on-the-spot" situations. Greater co-ordination at the country level should be sought by using fully the team of agency representatives within the Resident Co-ordinator system. For this purpose and in co-operation with governments and other concerned parties, a Communication Co-ordinating Committee could be established including the Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) of the project, representatives from governments, bilateral donors, NGOs and community leaders. It could be entrusted with the task of formulating communication policies, following up the implementation of these policies and preparing a joint report on the contribution of communication to the success of the project.

Recommendation 5 - Co-operation with NGOs

Communication at the field level involving popular participation of beneficiaries via local and international NGOs is one of the ways of ensuring the effectiveness of technical co-operation. The United Nations system should work more closely with development-oriented NGOs at the grass-roots level which have already proved to have sound communication channels with the beneficiaries.

Recommendation 6 - Round Table Conference

At present, there is no regular forum whereby discussions are held and views exchanged on development and humanitarian assistance communication programmes. This has resulted in the evolution of an informal Round Table Conference for Development Communication. Consecutive Round Table meetings have demonstrated a considerable amount of goodwill for practical co-operation.

The commitment and productivity of the experts participation in the Round Tables have proved that times are ripe for a better organized system of co-ordination in order to cross agency boundaries which have been recognized as barriers. To achieve this objective, the existing informal Round Table process should be regularized. It should include all United Nations agencies, the regional economic commissions of the United Nations and take into account the mandate of UNESCO on communication.

Recommendation 7 - IPDC

The Inspector believes that in order to avoid duplication and promote a better use of resources, the Intergovernmental Council of IPDC should look into the mandate of IPDC in order to enable it to respond more effectively to the needs of developing countries in the field of infrastructure building and mass media training. In the process of introducing possible changes, the following points, among others, should be taken into account:

(a) Improve the dissemination of information of IPDC programmes to agencies through more effective means of communication.

(b) Ensure that development communication and training programmes attract more contributions from United Nations agencies, bilateral and multilateral organizations, NGOs, foundations and universities,in addition to the fund-raising efforts of IPDC.

Recommendation 8 - Training

(a) Due to the fact that there is a lack of trained communication experts globally and in particular in developing countries, the organizations of the United Nations system should develop a systematic approach to training. Such training should benefit field workers/development agents, technicians, as well as communication planners and specialists at higher level.

(b) Academic institutions in developing and developed countries should be encouraged to include curricula for development communication.

(c) With the aim to cost saving, the use of existing infrastructures and facilities of the United Nations system, namely the ILO International Training Centre in Turin, should be considered by the appropriate ACC subsidiary body.

(d) The fund for financing these training programmes should be envisaged within the communication component budget and be allocated at the inception of projects.

Recommendation 9 - ACC Classification

Because of the constant evolution in the field of communication and its strategic value in disseminating information and sharing knowledge, the ACC programme classification on communication extended for UNDP use should be redefined to respond to needs of the Members States. For this, in addition to the class entries proposed by UNESCO, FAO and UNFPA should also be consulted in order to ensure an integrated and harmonized set of categories.

Recommendation 10 - Peace-Keeping Operations

The United Nations has no specific structure in place for immediate action to deal with communication when a peace-keeping operation emerges. The Inspector, based on past experience, is convinced that it is imperative for the United Nations to have a stand-by unit equipped with a group of communication experts, which would be entrusted with the task of operating in the field from the beginning of the operation to cover the entire spectrum of communication/ information requirements until the end of the operation. The Unit would be mobile and report directly to the head of DPKO. It should be established within the existing resources of DPKO and work very closely with UN/DPI, benefiting from its existing decentralized structure, representatives of agencies and other media fora to improve co-ordination among the parties acting at the field level. Depending on the nature of the peace-keeping operation, specialized agencies, UNESCO in particular because of its specific mandate, and NGOs should also be on call for the Secretary-General and ready to put at the disposal of the United Nations their expertise in this field.

Introduction

1. The notion of communication as considered in this report must not be confused with the technical means of communication such as telecommunications, informatics, postal services and similar devices, though they are indispensable vehicles to the dissemination of information and knowledge. Furthermore, the conceptual category of communication as specified in the title refers to development. In other words, this study deals with the central role of the discipline of communication for a successful implementation of development programmes and for an improvement of the interaction between actors in development, namely the United Nations system, governments, NGOs and the beneficiaries.

2. Because of this approach and in order to avoid overlapping, the JIU, under the guidance of the same Inspector, is preparing a separate study entitled "A review of Telecommunications and Related Information Technologies in the United Nations System". Although a sound telecommunication infrastructure is an essential support to development, the prevailing choice is in favour of a separate exploration of the subject. This is not only because of the specific suggestion which came from FAO, but also in consideration of the fact that the JIU has in the past undertaken two studies on the same topic entitled "Communication in the United Nations System" (JIU/REP/72/7 and JIU/REP/82/6). The rapid progress in technology and its bearing on the field of communications demand an updating on the subject which will be better tackled in a separate report.

3. As stated in Article I.2 of its Constitution, UNESCO is the principal United Nations Organization mandated to be responsible for communication. In addition, it also has the lead mandate in the field of social communication. UNESCO has, therefore, recognized, inter-alia, the need for a mechanism to co-ordinate communication activities through appropriate media and suggested to the JIU that it undertake a study on "Communication for Development Programmes in the United Nations System".

The terms of reference for the study are to:

(a) analyze and evaluate existing informal arrangements for the co-ordination of communicationat an inter-agency level;

(b) develop proposals for an improved and more institutionalized mechanism to facilitate co-ordination; and

(c) describe the particular dimension of communication and its specificity vis-a-vis other aspects of information technology, in particular informatics and telecommunications as support areas.

4. It is with this in mind and cognizant of the important evolution in the field of communication for development that the report will:

(a) try to define the notion of communication for development and its dimension as an instrument for rallying communities to participate in development projects from assessed needs to implementation, monitoring and evaluation;

(b) look into the communication programmes of UNESCO;

(c) examine the status of communication programmes of other agencies;

(d) review previous attempts and existing informal arrangements for the co-ordination of communication programmes for development in the United Nations system;

(e) examine the opportunity, evaluate the convenience and propose the setting-up of a more appropriate mechanism for enhancing co-operation among agencies;

(f) consider how this mechanism could strengthen communication in humanitarian assistance activities and in peace-keeping operations; and

(g) explore the possibility of cost saving aspects by using already-existing fora and facilities.

5. The methodology used for the preparation of the study was, mainly, visits by the Inspector to headquarters and field offices and analysis of replies to questionnaires provided by the specialized agencies: UNESCO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, United Nations/DPI, WFP, UNIDO, UNHCR, ILO, WHO, ITU, IMO, WMO, IAEA, ICAO, and FAO. It should be specified at the outset that some organizations have responded stating that they do not have communication for development programmes at the headquarters level; for others, only at the field level. Still others mentioned the fact that programmes for communication are implemented by the national authorities in co-operation with United Nations agencies. One organization stated that it does not have any information to contribute to the study, while another responded by stating that they have no communication programme in the sense that it is understood by UNESCO. Views were also exchanged with the communication departments of a university and non-governmental organization in the field.

6. The investigation showed that UNESCO's request has been particularly timely and has raised problem areas for which there is an increasing awareness and greater demand for solutions. This is also in the light of the fresh approach of the Secretary-General to the problems of development and of his appeal to the international community for more attention to be paid to such an important issue

the implications of which are so effectivley put into light in the "agenda for development".

7. The Inspector is grateful to all who have spared their time and energy to contribute to the preparation of the study. Their participation has greatly facilitated work on the report and stimulated research, providing a new dimension and commitment.

I. THE IMPORTANCE AND SCOPE OF THE FIELD OF COMMUNICATION

8. The importance and scope of "Communication for Development" differs widely from one organization to another. Organizations such as UNICEF, and UNFPA tend to decentralize their activities to the regional and country offices. They accord a great deal of importance to "communication/mobilization programmes". UNICEF alone spends over $100 million a year on such programmes. UNFPA allocated 17 percent of its resources for communication and education programmes in 1992. This was the second largest allocation after family planning, which also has a communication support component. WHO has allocated about $4 million for communication and public information at Headquarters level for the biennium 1994-95, representing approximately 0.5 percent of its total regular programme budget. United Nations/DPI allocates 0.6 percent of its overall regular budget for strengthening communication capabilities of developing countries. Other agencies do not have specific allocations for communication for development but they include communication as part of the approved work programme of some sections, whilst some have simply no financial allocation for communication. According to an FAO publication on Communication for Development, the overall budget for communication is about 10 percent of the total development programme budget. For large-scale programmes, however, it may be as low as one percent, and for small programmes somewhat higher than 10 percent.[1]

9. Two different approaches and orientations exist concerning communication. The first is field-oriented and relies on communication for human development emphasizing more popular participation through extension and development agents including development-oriented NGOs. The second approach maintains a global view of the problems of development rather than specific country policies and is mainly concerned with development of communication per se, involving the media in general with respect to the formulation of general programmes requiring global actions such as the campaign against AIDS, illiteracy, the promotion of the Programme of Health for all by the year 2000. Distinct actions and useful complementarity characterize these two approaches.

10. UNDP makes some funding available to both groups. Since the 1970s, it has evolved a policy whereby communication components are integrated in projects at the country level through the Development Support Communication Office (later called the Development Communication Training Programme) which also had regional bureaux. These funds were administered mainly by this Office, and not by the specialized agencies. As a matter of fact, most funds for communication were allocated for telecommunication and transportation projects proposed by governments.

11. Humanitarian assistance within the framework of peace-making and peace-keeping processes is a new area requiring communication structures. The Department of Peace-Keeping Operations (DPKO) is assigned an important communication and co-ordination role at Headquarters level by "co-ordinating

instructions sent to the field missions on operational matters as well as co-ordinating relationships between Headquarters, New York and each mission in the field by providing backstopping". The JIU through its report on "Staffing of the United Nations Peace-Keeping and Related Missions" (Civilian Component) (JIU/REP/93/6) has maintained that "...Communication from the field continues to be irregularly channelled to different departments at Headquarters creating further problems in the flow of information, co-ordination and hence, coherence and timely instructions".[2]

A. Principal ways of conveying public information

12. Public information concerning development programmes is presently conveyed in four principal ways:

(a) Provision of news and information to the people through the press, radio, television and audio-visual educational programmes.

(b) Informatics: access to data base and electronically-stored information in libraries, archives and cultural centres.

(c) Telecommunications: telephone services, facsimile, telex, telegrams, data transmission, electronic mail.

(d) Postal Services: mail and parcel services, telegrams.

13. Information technology has become an indispensable tool for developing an effective communication structure. New technologies are offering many opportunities, with the possibility of reaching untapped audiences. In many developing countries this could include interactive media. The United Nations system needs to be at the cutting edge of such possibilities. In more traditional areas, the use of radio has to be stressed and the conduct of journalists' training courses in developing countries should be seen as a form of capacity building.

14. Keeping up with modern technology is a priority concern to developing countries which have limited access to the information media. They seek more assistance in this area to ensure that their requirements for information technology are accurately reflected in every project set up to help them build up their information infrastructure. The World Bank states that "Information technology, if used correctly, can help increase workers' productivity, make governments and companies more flexible, and improve decision-making. In the long run, it can make governments more accountable and co-ordinated and could allow them to respond better to social needs".[3] The ITU in its Missing Link report concluded more dramatically that "...henceforth no development programme of any country should be regarded as balanced, properly integrated or likely to be effective unless it includes a full and appropriate role for telecommunications and accords corresponding priority for the improvement and expansion of telecommunications".[4]

B. Types of communications

15. The focus of this report, however, is not public information per se, but communication as part of the social process of development. With this limitation in mind, two types of communications are of special interest to the present report:

1. Communication for development purposes included in the design of projects.

2. Communication for humanitarian assistance activities and peace-making and peace-keeping processes.

1. Communication for Development

16. Communication for development is a specialized field which requires ad hoc training. As understood and used by agencies of the United Nations system, communication for development can be clustered in the following areas:

(a) advocacy at the national and global levels;

(b) public information at the national and global levels;

(c) programme communication and social mobilization at the project, community and individual levels; and

(d) use of tools and systems that enhance the above, namely the print media, interpersonal communication, telecommunication and networking.

17. The goal of communication for development is to integrate, within project designs, motivation and teaching skills to strengthen the processes that enable communities and people therein to acquire new knowledge, ideas and analyze decisions and actions. This objective corresponds closely to the mandates of most of the development agencies and in particular to that of the International Programme for Development Communication (IPDC) of UNESCO. The mandates of these agencies give a central role to communication. Some of the agencies such as UNICEF, FAO, WHO and UNEP have recognized the need for social mobilization of their activities which is beyond the traditional "provision of information", and is the essence of "communication" as distinct from information. Participatory approach to development can release a chain reaction leading to results by which development assistance can be measured.

18. An FAO publication on "Communication a key to human development" explains the role of communication as follows: "A decisive role can be played by communication in promoting human development in today's new climate of social change. As the world moves towards greater democracy, decentralization and the

market economy, conditions are becoming more favourable for people to start steering their own course of change. But it is vital to stimulate their awareness, participation and capabilities. Communication skills and technology are central to this task, but at present are often under-utilized. Policies are needed that encourage effective planning and implementation of communication programmes."[5]

19. The JIU report on "Evaluation of Rural Development Activities of the United Nations System in three African Least Developed Countries" (JIU/REP/89/2, A/45/76, E/1990/12) attempted to determine the extent to which beneficiaries were involved in the identification, planning and implementation of project activities. The report emphasized that communication should always be included in the preparation of projects to ensure that the project is needed and understood by the beneficiaries. A policy of communicating with the beneficiaries at the planning level of a programme, and taking into account their views and needs, is one way of assuring the success and sustainablity of the programme. Years of technical co-operation experience has proved that "popular participation" is indispensable for any United Nations project to succeed, and that ample use of communication can catalyze and multiply this popular participation. In fact, the IPDC accords first priority to the financing of projects from the least developed countries and annually prepares a budget for preparatory assistance for these countries' projects.[6]

20. A second, equally important, function of communication is the maintenance of liaison between the United Nations and the government decision/policy-makers throughout the duration of a project. The United Nations deals directly with sovereign states; it needs to enhance its communication with them. One way of achieving an effective channel of communication with appropriate government officials at the decision-making level would be by including formal training for local nationals in communication skills as an integrated component of development projects. This could include on-the-job training provided by project experts as well as formal educational institutions for training general communication experts.

(a) Training

21. A well-trained communication expert will not only help the government to understand the purpose of specific United Nations activities, but will also facilitate the task of United Nations specialized agencies by being the channel of communication with the government. To date, only a few organizations, namely UNESCO, UNICEF and FAO have trained communication specialists at the regional and national level as an integral part of projects. Within UNESCO, the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) provides training or finances training centres for communication experts. UNESCO establishes information, library and archives services for Members States through its "General Information Programme" (PGI). It trains computer specialists for developing countries through its "Inter-governmental Informatics Programme" (IIP). This is the only programme devoted to international co-operation concerned exclusively with informatics within the United Nations system.

22. UNESCO has trained communication specialists at the regional and national levels to assist in all phases of project formulation: definition of needs, planning and execution, co-ordination and evaluation. Links were established between countries and regions through regional media networks and national broadcasting institutions for the purpose of promoting projects in several countries such as the "Advancement of Women".

23. The General Assembly has requested the Secretary-General to direct the Publication Board under DPI, that it "provides, on the basis of its activities, information to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization about new forms of co-operation, at the regional and sub-regional levels, for the training of media professionals and for the improvement of information and communication infrastructures of developing countries.."[7] (A/AC.198/1992/L-2). This is different from the mandate of ITU, which is responsible for the development of more technical aspects of communication infrastructure such as public telecommunication, broadcasting and emerging value-added information services. The Inspector fully supports the mandate entrusted to the Secretary-General and believes that appropriate training in the field of journalism be designed and provided to United Nations system employees involved in massmedia reporting and communication tasks.

24. Through its Global Communication Support Fund, UNICEF organized a middle level journalism training programme in Asia. Radio and journalism training programmes are also designed for Africa.

25. WHO Headquarters in Geneva collaborated with UNESCO in organizing training workshops for media and health personnel in Africa and Asia on promoting communication for health through the media. Its regional office for Latin America provides national staff courses in journalism and post-graduate studies in health. It also encourages public health schools to do more training in communication.

26. The Inspector believes that providing practical media training to national counterparts is an essential component of improved communication for development, in general, and an important objective in operational development activities in particular. Ways and means should be explored to use existing programmes and infrastructures, without incurring additional cost. Equally relevant would be the identification of appropriate communication training centres in the beneficiary countries, thus encouraging partnership and long-term continuity. In this connection, the role of the ILO's International Training Centre in Turin could be considered as one of the possibilities. The curriculum of the comprehensive training course on "Management of Development: National Capacity Building" organized by the Centre could provide a model for communication.

27. In addition the ILO has invited all organizations of the United Nations system to make greater use of the Centre as a training facility. At its eightieth session in June 1993, the Committee on Technical Co-operation of the International Labour Conference called specifically on the Turin Centre to act as a key training instrument that should: "contribute to the design and implementation of various

training activities within the United Nations system with particular emphasis on the ILO mandate and strengthening the management capacity of recipient governments and social partners for technical co-operation and on fostering effective co-ordination and teamwork within the United Nations system itself". During 1990-1993 "some 950 participants, senior United Nations System officials as well as their national counterparts, have benefited from the various programmes conducted by the Centre in the area of management of technical co-operation and operational activities training".[8]

28. In relation to the above activities, the Inspector would like to propose that the Turin Centre should also extend its services and expertise to the United Nations regional commissions in order to strengthen their communication for development programmes.

(b) Co-ordination of communication at the country level

29. To improve co-ordination of communication in field projects, and particularly among the specialized agencies, there is a need for the United Nations system, in co-operation with governments and other concerned parties, to create a communication co-ordinating body, which would include government representatives, bilateral donors, community leaders and the United Nations agencies under the umbrella of United Nations Resident Co-ordinators. Among others, its tasks would include the formulation of communication policies and follow-up of their implementation.

30. UNESCO's attempt in the early 1970s to set up a Communication Policy Council for each country involving governments, NGOs and the professional community, was not successful. In most cases, it was not possible to establish the Councils and in the very rare cases where they were established they did not become operative. It should be noted, however, that historically speaking, these national councils were primarily aimed at influencing and designing relevant national policies for the planning of communication infrastructures, and not for field operations or implementation of projects. FAO, on the other hand, has successfully helped to establish development support communication national co-ordination mechanisms in Mali, and is now undertaking the same in Malawi, Comoros and Guinea Bissau. The format proposed by the JIU in report "Evaluation of Rural Development Activities of the United Nations system in Three African Least Developed Countries" mentioned earlier, suggested that a "Rural Development Co-ordinating Committee" should be established in two or three countries co-operating together.

31. The Inspector believes that, because of the awareness of the emergent needs for better communication structures both at the inter-agency and country level, the time has come for setting up a body for "Communication for Development and Humanitarian Assistance" at the country level. However, until such a body is established the existing infrastructures such as those of the United Nations Resident Co-ordinator and/or JUNIC at the country level could be used. Temporary modalities for co-operation should be established by ACC.

2. Communication for humanitarian assistance and peace-keeping operations deployed in the context of humanitarian assistance

(a) Humanitarian Assistance

32. Communication in the field of humanitarian assistance is not only desirable but is an integral part of the operations of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA).

33. One type of communication concerns natural disasters when communication channels have to be re-established between donors and beneficiaries. This is usually a short-term operation of about six months to one year, after which long-term national communication and development activities should start with the help of the specialized agencies. The second type deals with man-made disaster and conflict situations. Here, communication is again most essential since local people are the victims. DHA must negotiate to reach agreement with all sides to gain access to the affected population and provide the necessary assistance.

34. A concrete example of the importance that communication assumes in humanitarian assistance is the situation in former Yugoslavia, where the United Nations has to go through extensive negotiations to open humanitarian assistance corridors. Another example is the recent United Nations inter-agency mission (including UNDP's Regional Bureau for Africa, the Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation (BPPE), and Humanitarian Programmes, as well as WHO, UNICEF, and the Department for Humanitarian Affairs) set up to assess the situation of displaced women in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The mission identified the need for communication, specifically information, education and communication (IEC) to ensure, among other things, women's participation in rebuilding and reconciliation and for mobilizing them for leadership in these areas. Cut off from their homes and families, IEC was also seen as a vehicle to inform displaced populations of daily events and developments and even of how to locate family members. All these activities involve communication and co-ordination.

35. An early warning system, which is mostly used as a rapid response system, has been set up and is put in motion when disasters threaten, and is normally activated in the event of slow onset disasters such as cyclones and floods. This system is maintained and co-ordinated by DHA whereby an inter-agency team consisting of UNICEF, UNHCR, FAO, UNDP, and NGOs is sent out to the field under the auspices of DHA to assess the need for urgent action and to appeal to donors accordingly. Thus, DHA acts as a channel of communication to bring together donors, people and governments.

36. In 1993, in anticipation of disaster and relief operations, UNESCO contributed to a regional workshop in the Caribbean to determine the role the mass media should play in disaster alert and relief operations. In addition, several training programmes were organized in Cambodia including a media handbook on land mine awareness. UNESCO also established the Centre for Journalists in

Ljubljana to assist in ensuring objective news reporting during the current civil strife; assistance has also been provided to independent newspapers and journalists. In addition, UNESCO has been assisting the National and University library of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Sarajevo by providing books and preparing plans for reconstruction, thereby contributing to the intellectual aspects of humanitarian aid.

(b) Peace-keeping operations

37. DPKO is the main department responsible for peace-keeping operations and related missions which include humanitarian assistance and election process. All operations are managed from New York. A survey by the JIU has evidenced, for the civilian component, the lack of a professional structure in the field, which resulted in uneven-handed discharging of the United Nation's peace-keeping responsibilities. (JIU/REP/93/6).[9]

38. The United Nations had a budget of over 3 billion dollars for peace-keeping operations in 1993 alone. This is more than the regular budget of the United Nations.[10] The possibilities for the United Nations to be involved in further peace-keeping operations are on the rise, making communication crucial both in humanitarian and peace-keeping efforts.

39. Peace-keeping operations in their different forms also come under consideration especially when they are employed as a vehicle to ensure humanitarian assistance. Their involvement is particularly relevant in peace-making when it is necessary to restore the structure of destroyed states and set up the indispensable framework for development and humanitarian aid.

40. The United Nations humanitarian assistance and peace-keeping activities in both Somalia and the former Yugoslavia are of particular significance. In the case of Somalia, the purpose of the United Nations presence has not always been clearly explained and was partly misunderstood due to insufficient communication processes. The useful recourse to the distribution of information leaflets from helicopters came at a crucial moment since the population was not informed about the purpose of the United Nations presence. The lacuna in communication of field operations demonstrates a clear gap between the United Nations and the public which deserves better attention in general during specific peace-making missions.

41. One of the main obstacles identified by the Inspector during the preparation of this study is that there has been limited advance planning and no comprehensive communication policy on peace-keeping. Operations have been carried out on an ad hoc basis. The results have been uneven because of actions taken under pressure, lack of financial and staff resources as well as slow recruitment processes.

42. Difficulties are aggravated by non-existent or insufficient co-ordination with serious consequences such as mismanagement, waste of resources. The Inspector was informed, for instance, that in Somalia a very large amount of communication

equipment (satellite earth stations) have been provided without any co-ordination of the several links belonging to different agencies and without plans for the retrieval and future use of the material. In Cambodia, substantial funds were spent on installing radio and TV stations with the purpose of ensuring the success of the electoral process. But at the end of the elections there was no co-ordination on how this valuable equipment could be used and what would be the best destination. The organization of communication cannot ignore these aspects. They raise serious problems and require urgent solutions to respond to the increasing demand of Member States for better accountability, transparency and careful use of financial resources.

43. The content and modality of delivery of the information is the essence of communication responsibilities which concerns the United Nations Joint Information Committee (JUNIC), its Secretariat, and the Department of Public Information (DPI). They can play an effective role in crisis areas around the world to improve the United Nations image. But the role of public information in peace-keeping and humanitarian assistance cannot be fully implemented without the indispensable component of communication in all its different aspects.

II. EXISTING INTER-AGENCY COMMUNICATION MECHANISM

44. The investigations of the Inspector have clearly evidenced the need to harmonize development communication in the United Nations system. In the present study, an attempt is made to assess these felt needs and related issues. Also examined are existing temporary arrangements for inter-agency co-ordination to see if these could be made more effective and whether a more permanent set-up is desirable. Proposals of an immediate and long-term nature are made, keeping in mind the mandates of the specialized agencies, especially that of UNESCO because of its specific competence in the field of communication.

45. Other agencies are also co-operating in this field. One of the many examples is the recent initiative taken by UNESCO and UNFPA to prepare a training package on communication as a discipline. The study was entitled "Approaches to development communication: an orientation kit and resource". Three main objectives were given for the training package: (i) "to identify each agency's concern with communication in general and development communication in particular; (ii) to examine community development projects and activities and look for representative examples; and (iii) to describe the conceptual underpinning of development communication as it is being practised".[11] Researchers from two universities were involved in the preparation of the training package. The profiles contained in the kit examine communication as it relates to the various United Nations agencies and how it fits into their general activities.

46. The ILO and the United Nations are making new arrangements and programmes whereby closer co-operation between the United Nations and the ILO Turin Centre will be established in the areas of, "operational activity training"; "development management"; "humanitarian affairs"; "international drug control programmes (UNDCP)"; and "United Nations peace-keeping operations".[12] However, in order to make all these programmes effective, training in "communication for development programmes" should be included in the list.

47. Another example is the co-operation between FAO and UNICEF on rural radio training packages undertaken in several countries, including a rural broadcasting project in Chad. A "Development Support Communication " (DSC) branch has been established within the Information Division of FAO, with the specific mandate to support FAO's major substantive programmes in agriculture, forestry and fisheries. UNESCO has a Communication Division which includes a section for Communication Development. This is the analogous counterpart of FAO's DSC offices. There are also nine UNESCO Regional Communication Advisers, one in each major region or sub-region of the world. UNESCO uses DSC concepts in many of its field projects. It is co-operating with ITU in joint studies in the field of satellite, telecommunication tariffs, utilization and exchange of data; and master plans for broadcasting in developing countries. Almost all field-oriented agencies are co-operating in the areas of environment and protection against AIDS.

48. These efforts can be pulled together to benefit the agencies through their mutual experience and to produce better results from their programmes. Cost saving, reduction or elimination of duplication of efforts, and an improved mechanism of co-ordination are needed. Not all agencies have yet attempted to create development communication offices nor have they identified focal points at their respective headquarters to facilitate inter-agency co-ordination and exchange of information on communication. The next chapter explains and further analyzes the role of UNESCO, the agency requesting this study, as well as other agencies involved in the field of communication for development programmes.

A. The Role of UNESCO: Communication, Information and Informatics

49. UNESCO is recognized by the General Assembly of the United Nations as a lead agency in the field of social communications. Unlike many other organizations, UNESCO sees communication as a major programme in its own right and not only as a support to other development processes.[13] It plays an important role in fields ranging from information exchange to the establishment of communication infrastructures. As set out in its Constitution, UNESCO's primary objective is "building the defense of peace in the minds of men" and promoting the free flow of ideas by word and image. The Organization, therefore, seeks to assist developing countries to build, reinforce or expand their communication systems through modern technologies.

50. UNESCO now has a comprehensive, integrated sectoral programme for Communication, Information and Informatics. Each of these programmes is managed by a division. Parallel with this structure are three intergovernmental bodies that advise and raise funds. Respectively, these are the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), the Intergovernmental Committee for the General Programme of Information (PGI) and the International Informatics Programme (IIP). Public information is handled by a separate unit: the Office for Public Information.

(a) International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC)

51. The International Programme for the Development of Communication was established in 1981 to help developing countries in setting up new communication infrastructures and/or improving existing ones, as well as in providing training or financing training centres for communication experts. IPDC is financed through voluntary contributions. It is the only intergovernmental programme which serves the needs of public and private communication institutions and gives priority to freedom of expression, media pluralism and independence. In 1992, the General Assembly of the United Nations urged all countries, organizations of the United Nations system and others concerned to "....Provide full support for the International Programme for the Development of Communication of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which should support both public and private media".[14] (A/AC.198/1992/L.2)

52. The IPDC meets annually to review project needs and requests. A recent innovation has been project reviews at the regional level in co-operation with non-governmental communication experts. It is responding to communication demands of a broad spectrum of countries often not included on donors' lists, but it is limited in its response by the generosity of its donors.

53. Historically, the IPDC began with the regular convening of an inter-agency committee in order to discuss areas of co-operation and possible IPDC funding for communication projects of other agencies. With limited contributions, however, it became impossible to provide adequate funding for projects strictly outside the scope of communication development. As a result of diminished funding for other agencies, their attendance became less and less frequent and the inter-agency committee eventually lapsed into disuse. Nonetheless, IPDC continues to fund several projects for health campaigns in Asia with WHO, rural postal services with UPU, agricultural communication projects with FAO and co-operates with ITU on technical projects. United Nations specialized agencies are invited to all meetings of the IPDC Council.

54. The response to the JIU questionnaire on "Communication for Development Programmes" sent to agencies together with discussions the Inspector had with agencies officials, indicate the view that the role of IPDC could be strengthened to respond to current needs of countries, in particular in the field of media training at project level. UNDP, for example, was willing to fund and organize seminars under IPDC to promote independent and pluralistic media in Windhoek (Namibia) and Alma Alta (Kazakhstan).[15] It is doing the same for the conference in Santiago, Chile, on MEDIA DEVELOPMENT AND DEMOCRACY IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN. UN/DPI has also given concrete support to IPDC under the auspices of UNESCO, in co-operation with UNDP, in preparing the two seminars mentioned above. In addition the Department co-sponsored also the seminar in Latin America and the Caribbean.

55. However, while UNDP has funded seminars on independent and pluralistic media, it has been less willing to fund communication development projects in the last twelve years. There has been no major UNESCO communication project funded by UNDP since 1982. UNDP should also fund the projects emanating from these seminars organized by both the United Nations and UNESCO, as well as worthy development communication projects proposed under the country programmes.

56. WHO Headquarters and its regional office for the Americas (PAHO) would like to see IPDC collaborate with countries in developing infrastructure and policy framework for social communication to enhance local culture and ensure equitable access to communication opportunities. It is also the view of UNIDO that IPDC could be effective by consulting very closely with each of the relevant agencies on their specific aims. UNESCO and IPDC have collaborated with countries and specialized agencies in developing infrastructure and policy frameworks for social communication and are still doing so, though perhaps not adequately, but this is due mainly to insufficient financial resources.

(b) General Information Programme (GPI)

57. UNESCO also manages the General Information Programme (PGI), established in 1976. It is the focal point of the Organization's activities designed to create and strengthen information, documentation, library and archives services for Member States. Among other things, PGI "specifically aims to increase the capacities of the developing countries to organize, disseminate and utilize information received".[16]

(c) Inter-governmental Informatics Programme (IIP)

58. A further initiative by UNESCO to enhance communication is through the "Inter-governmental Informatics Programme" (IIP). Its principal objective is "to develop human resources through the use of informatics to work towards comprehensive and sustainable development". Since its creation, IIP has participated in over 50 projects having training as their central theme.

59. The Inspector recognizes that the fields of the Communication, Information and Informatics (CII) sector are well established and under a single unit within UNESCO. The CII sector is related to all other sectors of the Organization mainly through inter-sectoral task forces and committees as well as through mutual, technical backstopping of operational projects. New technologies are also being studied in collaboration with ITU for application under reduced telecommunication tariffs for data exchange networks and distance education.

Intersectoral and inter-agency co-operation in design and implementation of projects

60. UNESCO promotes inter-sectoral and inter-agency co-operation, for example in population projects. It intends to include UNEP, UNFPA, UNDP and WHO in its future programmes within the broad framework of "Environment and Population Education and Information for Human Development". The programme will be primarily concerned with relations between the environment, population and development and includes those aspects of education aimed at combatting drug abuse and the spread of AIDS.

61. UNESCO attempted, within the United Nations system, to press for a recognition of communication as a sector in its own right. However, a major problem was encountered in assigning communication a place in development planning. The United Nations system in general did not see the problem in this light. Within the UNDP for example, communication was regarded as part of either transport or telecommunications sectors, or as an educational support. In the ACC classification system it is partly under culture.

62. The Inspector, on the basis of efforts made by UNESCO, is also convinced that communication planning cannot be carried out in isolation. It has to be part and parcel of the overall national development plan of a country and an integrated

part of United Nations agencies' programmes for development. One way of achieving this is by including communication as a major programme in the medium-term plans of agencies and as an important sectoral component of their extrabudgetary development projects.

B. Agencies' need for communication and co-ordination

63. All United Nations agencies need to communicate primarily amongst themselves and with those to whom they are committed.

64. There is wide agreement that "communication" is a prerequisite for successful project implementation and that most agencies have important communication programmes. However, each one attaches to it a different level of importance. Some believe that it should be a sector on its own while others say it should remain as a support to other programmes.

65. UNDP has no clear policy on development communication and it does not feature prominently in the project designs. Use of Development Support Communication (DSC) has been on an ad hoc basis. The original project design procedures, which were used up to 1987, included a section on DSC, but this section was dropped when the procedures were changed. The Organization has no communication unit at Headquarters and is of the opinion that co-ordination of communication programmes should be at the country level involving governments.

66. Although UNDP actively supported development communication in the late sixties, the discipline has not received adequate and sustained attention. UNDP's involvement with DSC has traditionally been limited to such initiatives as its 1969 collaboration with UNICEF to establish a DSC service in Bangkok for the Asia and Pacific region. Now based in Manila, it is self-financing from the services it provides to mainly United Nations assisted projects in the region.

67. From 1987-1993 the UNDP Regional Programme Division of the Africa Bureau endorsed the use of communication support in the implementation of its women-in-development (WID) programme. Given the multi-faceted, multi-agency approach to WID, communication support was viewed as a necessary element to link people and their activities in the project, and to enhance the level of participation in these projects.

68. Communication in UNDP was seen as a means to maximize the benefits of development goals through popular participation. A strategy was adopted which involved the use of traditional communication channels and multi-media campaigns including radio, films, posters, TV and brochures. This has led to an informed public support for the goals of the project and endorsement by African institutions, governments, and a number of field offices, of communication support mechanisms for use in development projects.

69. UNICEF, like UNDP, also believes that communication should be included in programmes at the field level with a recognition of the role of its professionalism. It is one of the Organizations which has a decentralized system of management and all its country offices have had information/communication units for the last 5 years. Communication officer posts are at P-3 and P-4 levels. In addition, UNICEF established a Global Communication Support Fund in 1990 to encourage the development of innovative communication projects in developing countries in support of UNICEF programme activities. Since its inception, the Global Communication Support Fund has helped to finance a variety of initiatives in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

70. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) is the only regional commission visited by the Inspector in relation with this study. Lack of resources prevented covering all five regional commissions of the United Nations as desired. But the choice was also influenced by the special attention given to Africa in the present difficult political, economic and social juncture. In this context the Inspector was pleased to verify the priority that the Commission has given recently to "communication" in general. It was therefore appropriate and timely for the JIU to single out ECA for its investigation in the field. Needless to say, the issues discussed, such as the need for more co-operation and co-ordination in the field of communication and for more emphasis on training for communication specialists at the country and regional level, are also directly relevant to the other regional commissions and lessons learned have a general relevance. (See also the forthcoming report of JIU entitled "Review and Assessment of Efforts to Restructure the Regional Dimension of United Nations Economic and Social Activities".)

71. The findings of the Inspector are that although "revitalizing ECA's communication strategy ranks very high among the priorities for institutional reforms and renewal", communication for development as such has not been prominent within ECA. There is, however, an increasing awareness of the importance of communication for improving the impact of development programmes.

72. The issues of communication are formally dealt with by the Department of Information. But this, it was explained, is due mostly to lack of resources. It is recognized that the target should be to establish a separate office in recognition of the substantial differences between the two fields. In practice, it has been noted that there has not been a systematic input of development support communication (DSC) into the work programmes of the various substantive divisions of the Commission nor has enough attention been given to communication in designing and/or implementing projects. However, this is a situation of which ECA is conscious and for which remedial action is foreseen.

73. Recently, the Commission, under the responsibility of the Policy and Programme Co-ordination Office (PPCO), has prepared a communications strategy report entitled "An improved Communications Strategy for Africa". The report consists of, inter alia, a "three-pronged approach that focuses on enhancing the

quality of ECA's products - mostly published materials; strengthening its processes, in particular contacts with Member States; and improving publicity for ECA's products and activities".[17] All the above-mentioned efforts would lead to improved communication in general and to a better image of ECA in particular. It would also, indirectly, have a positive effect on the development programmes of the Commission.

74. The Inspector commends the efforts and steps being taken by ECA to improve its communication strategy and agrees that this deserves encouragement and support especially if more importance will be given to communication as an indispensable component of development programmes. In a broader perspective, the Inspector favours the opinion that the regional commissions should be more involved in the inter-agency communication mechanism. Their role is not always sufficiently acknowledged because they are part and parcel of the United Nations Secretariat. The regional commissions' need is strongly felt by ECA and it should be given a niche as a leading agency at the regional level. The General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in their series of resolutions, (in particular 32/197 of 20 December 1977 and 33/202 of 29 January 1979), have stressed the importance of the United Nations regional commissions in the area of regional co-operation, co-ordination and development for their respective regions. They emphasized, among others, that United Nations economic and social activities be decentralized, that regional commissions become operational and execute projects, and that the commissions be given resources for these tasks.[18] Several years later, the regional commissions are faced now more than ever before with lack of resources, hence hampered from carrying out their mandates as requested by the different United Nations governing bodies.

75. ECA has several centres and departments which depend on extrabudgetary resources to carry out their activities. One of these sectors is the "African Training and Research Centre for Women" (ATRCW), which has a very well designed communication network throughout Africa, but has been hampered from implementing its projects because of lack of resources. At the time of the JIU visit, the Centre received a donation from a Government for the project "improving the communication network at the African Training and Research Centre for Women". The objective of the project is to improve "Channels of communication between ATRCW and member governments' agencies, development organizations, media institutions, etc."[19]

76. The Inspector is convinced that similar projects need to be supported by donor agencies, bi-lateral donors and multi-lateral organizations through increased funding and initiatives aimed at strengthening communication for development policies within the United Nations regional commissions.

77. FAO is firmly convinced that people-oriented development can only realize its full potential if knowledge is shared, if technologies are transferred and if the rural populations are motivated, organized and involved. Communication caters to the human dimensions of development: it establishes a dialogue with rural

people, involves them in the planning of their own development, and conveys the knowledge and skills required to improve the quality of their life.

78. Communication methodologies, tools and technologies can help overcome the barriers of illiteracy, language, intercultural differences and physical isolation. Modern systems of communication are merged with traditions, cultural values and aspirations of rural families in order to create a critical awareness of problems and build a capacity to respond to them.

79. FAO and the World Bank cite PRODERITH, an integrated rural development programme in Mexico, as an example of a successful communication programme which has applied communication methods and tools to involve people in the planning and implementation of local development programmes as well in the sharing of knowledge and skills with farmers and technicians and providing information to decision-makers.

80. An FAO brochure entitled "Guidelines on communication for rural development", calls for conscious and active participation of the beneficiaries at every stage of the development process. It states that this cannot take place without changes in attitudes and behaviour among the people concerned. It defines development communication as "the planned and systematic use of communication through interpersonal channels, audiovisual and mass media", and considers the radio the most effective way in many development projects, especially when the rate of illiteracy is high.

81. The major aims of development communication as underlined in the Guidelines are:

- reaching a consensus on the development problems being faced and the options for their solution;

- solving problems and misunderstandings that may arise during project implementation;

- applying communication technology to training and extension programmes, particularly at the grassroots level, in order to improve their quality and impact.[20]

82. In summary, FAO through its DSC Branch, has promoted and operated communication activities in two broad categories: first, those that are part of a specific communication project and secondly, communication projects per se such as strengthening rural radio broadcasting, establishing communication units, suggesting communication strategies.[21]

83. Another relevant example of the value of involving beneficiaries is "the Programme of Assistance to Displaced Persons, Refugees and Repatriations in Central America known as PRODERE"[22] This is a joint programme of co-operation between Italy, UNDP and UNHCR whereby several Latin American countries were involved from the design to the implementation stages of the programme. Those who were once refugees have now been repatriated and begun a normal life.

84. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has three units dealing with Communication/Information. They are:

(a) The Public Information Division which is the spokes-person for the High Commissioner.
(b) Goodwill Ambassadors for special events; and
(c) Mass Information.

85. The Public Information Division and goodwill Ambassadors for special events are traditional avenues for informing and creating public awareness about refugees. Mass Information however, is a new method with the purpose of providing objective information to refugees and asylum seekers. It is a "method to regularize unwanted population movements, to promote voluntary repatriations and to support peace-keeping operations". [23]

86. The Mass Information programme was started in 1989-90 with a comprehensive plan for Indo-Chinese refugees. Information about the legal aspects and life-style in the different countries of asylum, including economic and social problems, were broadcast via radio and television to the people of Vietnam who wanted to leave their country. This communication and information process succeeded in reducing by 70 to 80 percent the flow of people leaving their country for various reasons and increased the number of legal refugees. The Indo-China experience is now being used by the Mass Information programme in the case of refugees from the former Yugoslavia and Albania, as well as asylum seekers. UNHCR is carrying out a joint programme in Russia in co-operation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) with the objective of stabilizing "irregular population movements through information and mass awareness".[24]

87. Although not fully a development-oriented Organization, UNHCR depends greatly on communication and information for the success of its protection and assistance programmes. It insists that the people who are involved in communications must be experts in the field. The office responsible for the implementation of the programmes is part of the External Relations Department.

88. The WHO governing bodies have always stressed the need and importance of communication and education for health and development. The major aims are:

(a) to strengthen advocacy for health and heighten public awareness about health and related development issues;

(b) to promote intersectoral support and community mobilization for health action;

(c) enhance people's knowledge and interest in dealing with specific health problems and issues; and

(d) facilitate the adoption of healthy behaviours and life-styles.[25]

89. Promotion of advocacy for health, including advocacy with decision-makers, support to training in communication for health, production and distribution of videos, news excerpts, teleconferences, radio programmes, photos and exhibits, brochures on priority health issues are among key communication actions organized by WHO. These actions are carried out by the WHO health education and public information entity at Headquarters. A similar set-up exists in the six WHO regional offices. The WHO Regional Office for Africa is promoting public information and communication for health at country-level through the work of its health information assistants established in the WHO country offices of the region.

90. Through its regional office in Latin America (PAHO), WHO maintains different levels of communication with universities, Ministries of Health, science foundations and NGOs. Each type of communication applies a different strategy and technology. PAHO is the first to organize teleconferences on AIDS for the region. They have developed a computer network through INTERNET to exchange information and believe that with a good communication system an effective technical assistance programme can be realized.

91. PAHO has offices in all South American countries and can reach the population through radio and television programmes, brochures and workshops. A useful communication tool is the publication "Health Communication" published annually. It contains country profiles used to analyze and evaluate daily information for decision-makers. There is a general concern in WHO that social communication factors need to be accepted by governments and that there is a need to institutionalize awareness at the decision-making level.

92. The World Bank keeps the issue of communication on its agenda. Some sectors such as information, environment and family planning work with NGOs and use their communication devices.

93. The Bank recently launched a review of its lending programmes and set up a task force headed by one of its Vice- Presidents. Among the concerns expressed in the report of the task force is the decline of lending operations reflected by the criteria of the Bank. The report attempted to find the reasons why lending is on the decrease and among other measures suggested that **"Communication should be part of the planning process at the inception level".**[26]

94. Based on the above findings, the Bank anticipates having a Communication and Information Strategy through the stages of conceptualization and implementation of projects. Popular participation will be designed to include:

- participatory involvement at the conceptualization level; and
- participatory learning process.

95. The Bank has, for the first time, allocated a fund of $300,000 for the participatory approaches. The structure of the fund is being worked out and the first task will be to obtain information from outside official circles as well. In

implementing this programme, the Bank needs partnership with other United Nations agencies. The Inspector was informed that the Bank will need an intermediary to widen and speed up communications. Co-operation could be established in this area with organizations such as UNDP which already has infrastructures set up at the country level.

96. The above across-the-board analysis demonstrates and confirms that communication has an essential role to play in the success of development programmes carried out by the international community, through the United Nations system.

C. Informal Network: Round Table Conferences on Communication for Development.

97. The following paragraphs deal with some, albeit informal, concrete actions taken by the agencies in co-operation with external institutions including universities and NGOs.

98. Over 30 years have passed since Organizations of the United Nations system launched the technical co-operation approach to assist developing countries in their efforts to improve their socio-economic status. The Inspector was made aware that these efforts and goodwill of organizations would have been more effective and beneficial to the recipients had sound communication components been included in the programmes. This simply means that in the preparation of projects and/or programmes a bigger share should have been reserved for those who were going to use them and benefit from the implementation. Well-designed communication programmes improve understanding among the main actors of development, encourage co-ordination between agencies involved in development work and increase efficient and effective use of scarce resources. It is regrettable that General Assembly Resolution 47/199 "Triennial policy review of operational activities for development within the United Nations system", which deals with practically all development issues does not make any reference to communication for development programmes.

99. Each agency contacted by the Inspector pointed out the importance of communication as a prerequisite for any development programme to succeed. However, the definition and understanding of the discipline vary and in some cases is non-existent. The need to co-ordinate communication for development efforts has not yet been accepted system-wide. Each agency has its own distinct approach and is rarely aware of what other agencies are trying to achieve in the same field. This again is partly due to their policies which are reflected in their operational programmes and projects. This results in financial waste, encourages duplication of efforts and decreases efficiency. A higher impact would have resulted if there had been more systematic and permanent co-operation and co-ordination.

100. Many agencies have participated, under the sponsorship of different organizations, in a series of "Round Tables on Communication for Development" convened on an almost regular basis. This arrangement is the only inter-agency professional consultation mechanism for development communication. It involves communication specialists from the United Nations system, multilateral and bilateral agencies. It aims to improve communication programmes and create a common framework of approaches to communication for development. The first round table was held at UNICEF headquarters in New York in 1989, the second in Ottawa in 1990, the third at FAO Headquarters in Rome in 1991 and the fourth in Lima, Peru, in 1993. The fifth is planned to be held in Sri Lanka in 1994 organized by the Worldview International Foundation. The participants included multilateral organizations, NGOs, universities and United Nations system organizations.

101. The initiatives taken by those involved in establishing a forum for discussing the inadequacy of communication for development within the United Nations system are to be commended and encouraged. The Inspector, however, would like to make the following analysis of the round table conferences held so far, with the aim of making the process more effective and responsive to current needs.

D. Analysis of the Round Tables

102. The original objectives of the round tables were primarily to share information and propose areas for co-operation among the specialized agencies and other members, mainly on an informal basis. Communication specialists who have participated in the round tables have spent much effort on programmes and projects and not enough on convincing decision-makers about appropriate policy. "The round tables began as a club for people from industrialized countries but are now open to others"[27] says one of the reports of the conference. The question remains, how open?

103. The mix of participants in the round tables should include more people from developing countries. Representatives of the private sector should also be included in future conferences. Round tables should aim beyond the simple exchange of information and focus also on strategy and joint operations.

104. The round table process has been kept informal and inaccessible to many agencies. The largest development financing agency of the United Nations system, namely UNDP, has not participated in these Round Tables for Development Communication. It emerged from the investigation that most UNDP staff members know little, if anything, about these round tables. The Inspector is, therefore, convinced that efforts should be deployed in this direction so that agencies could benefit from a greater sharing of information and experience. An open forum whereby all agencies involved in development and humanitarian activities can participate may be preferable. However, to keep its effectiveness and flexibility the participants of each organization should be limited in number.

105. All agencies, with the exception of UNICEF, FAO and UN/DPI, have responded to the JIU questionnaire stating that they favour the formalization of the Round Table Conference. One organization suggested that the Conference must have focus to be effective. Another argued, however, that this forum should stay informal to ensure that "The Round Table is accessible only to eminent persons who can contribute and develop ideas and approaches concerning information and communication strategies".

106. FAO is greatly interested in the yearly round tables continuing as an informal forum which llows the involvement of academic institutions and NGOs, each contributing with its own experiences, but without a too rigid and formal set-up. The informal forum is, in FAO's view, more productive for wide participation, freedom of expression and for discussion of practical experiences. It favours, furthermore, the possibility of joint ventures (a package programme is organized between FAO, UNICEF and UNESCO in the field of radio broadcasting).

107. The round table has been in existence only five years. During this time, it has contributed to the recognition of the importance of communication and discussed problems dealing with communication for development in an informal and flexible manner. The conclusion drawn by the Inspector regarding round tables is that they have thus far been an exclusive forum for those who have the knowledge and the means to participate. It would be unfortunate if this great potential for co-operation among agencies in communication for development is not expanded to include all organizations of the United Nations System, hence fully exploited and its learning more widely shared. Nonetheless, the Inspector does appreciate the heuristic and exploratory nature of this informal mechanism.

E. Analysis of problems of co-operation and co-ordination at the inter-agency level

108. At present, inadequate attention is given to the role of communication in development and humanitarian assistance. Few agencies, other than UNESCO, UNICEF and FAO, consider communication as a programme in its own right. In effect, several agencies have not allocated a fund to the communication programme. This has led in several cases to the launching of development and humanitarian projects without adequate information and involvement of the beneficiaries. Consequently, the impact of technical co-operation during the last 40 years has, in several instances, left much to be desired.

109. The Inspector is aware of the different mandates entrusted to each agency by their governing bodies. He is, however, convinced, as repeatedly requested by the General Assembly, that exchanging views on activities and being aware of what other agencies are doing in the same field would go a long way towards making the United Nations communication and information system more relevant and effective. It would also reduce unnecessary duplication of efforts and waste of meagre resources. As one United Nations funding agency stated, "all agencies seem concerned with promoting their own concerns rather than with collaboration for overall development goals". The Secretary-General, in his statement before the

Fifth Committee at the 48th Session of the General Assembly, stated that "Restructuring alone will not produce all the changes that are needed. Concrete steps must be taken to improve co-ordination and efficiency". The time has come, therefore, to change the traditional resistance to co-ordination. Sharing information should be viewed in the light of the changing environment of development. The needs of recipient countries and the financial contributions of the donors should be more fully taken into account.

110. Communication for any programme within the United Nations system should be developed at three levels:

(a) communication within the organization's major departments;

(b) communication at the inter-agency level; and

(c) communication with the beneficiaries and decision- makers at the country level.

111. **The agencies should make the effort to set up a mechanism whereby departments will inform each other about the work done on communication in their respective units. There should be an office which assumes the responsibility of co-ordinating the activities in communication and the same office should be the link at the inter-agency level and between headquarters and field offices.**

112. **In principle, agencies agree that communication is the prerequisite for the successful operation of any programme, be it development or humanitarian assistance.** But the present set-up in some agencies of having communication within the Information Division diminishes the importance of the discipline. The task of an information division is to disseminate what is being done by the organizations and the beneficiaries in the most participatory manner. The task of a communication division is to assist field project managers in making their work understood, firstly within their own organization, secondly among the sister agencies and, most important of all, by the beneficiaries. **The findings of the Inspector confirm that in the absence of a comprehensive communication programme none of the above functions can be done systematically.**

113. UNESCO suggested the rationale for a project on development communication in 1989. The background document for the UNESCO initiative states that "there is a general acceptance that effective, interactive communication is a prerequisite for development" and that "development communication is the sharing of knowledge aimed at reaching a consensus for action that takes into account the interests, needs and capacities of all concerned. It is thus a social process".

114. UNICEF sees communication for development programmes as a key aspect of programme delivery and defines it accordingly. Programme communication assists implementation of all UNICEF programmes, whether they concern health, water and sanitation, primary education or other subjects. A wide range of

information materials aim at both traditional and high-technology media and are supported by highly qualified expertise at both national and global levels.

115. It seems that there is broad consensus on general principles, despite the fact that different approaches and policies have been followed. It is this diversity which has convinced JIU to try to work out a more satisfactory method of inter-agency co-ordination. **The moment has come to design and implement concrete communication programmes in the field of development. For reasons of efficiency and cost-saving, ways and means must be found to achieve maximum output from international efforts deployed in favour of developing countries.**

116. Development projects have sometimes been disappointing if only because the local beneficiaries were not in a position to exploit them fully. The failure in several instances has also been attributed to the fact that the population to which the project was directed was not prepared to receive the innovations. At any rate, development programmes did not integrate into the local scene. An excess of technological ingredients coupled with a "top to down" mentality has not improved communication. **Sharing of knowledge requires a two-way communication, the appropriate use of which can help to overcome barriers of misunderstanding and avoid failure of projects.**

117. In the assessment of possible shortcomings and the search for remedies, the evolution of communication technologies cannot be underestimated. The challenge now is to make the best use of this evolution.

118. **Failure in programmes are also the consequence of miscalculations due to insufficient attention focused on the communication dimension in the preparation phase of the programmes themselves.**

119. From the reactions of some participating agencies on the subject of harmonious integration at the local level and coordination at the inter-agency level, viable recommendations can be drawn.

120. In a recent intervention before the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination (CPC) a member of the JIU described the frustration caused by lack of co-ordination within the United Nations system: (Statement made at the CPC meeting on May 13 1993).

121. The Inspector agrees with the view of agencies like UNESCO, WHO and FAO that planning for communication development in the Third World must be global, must have technological and social dimensions, and must be combined with an integrated and intersectoral approach. This leads to the recognition that communication should always be assigned a proper place in development planning. **In this context, the proposal to modify the ACC programme classification extended to UNDP use deserves support as it takes into account the far-reaching evolution in the field of communication as a key factor in the social and economic process of development.**

122. Though agencies have different approaches to the problem, an encouraging assessment of converging views emerges from UNESCO: "..approaches to development communication cannot be confined to a single sector or problem area. Thus, even when agency approaches necessarily focus upon, or take as their starting point, a particular perception (such as UNFPA towards population), it should be recognized that in the analysis of basic problems, such as the bases of individual behaviour, and in the application of communication to the resolution of such problems, a holistic view is necessary. Where communication media are involved in development, the capacity of local infrastructures and the imagination and resourcefulness of communication professionals are important factors to be accommodated in planning and training approaches."

123. Among the objectives discussed with the agencies, two can be roughly summarized as follows:

- identify ways and means by which to consolidate the existing informal network;

- develop possible common strategies for future activities in communication for development.

124. The round table meetings have shown a considerable amount of goodwill for practical co-operation. They have evidenced duplications and wasted effort caused by independent initiatives.

125. The commitment and the productivity of the experts in the round tables have proved that times are perhaps ripe for a better organized system of co-ordination in order to cross agency boundaries which have been recognized as barriers.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE ACTIONS ON THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

A. Conclusions on the Round Table Conference

126. Round table participants agree that better strategies for communication should be developed in co-operation with the decision-makers. The need for a joint effort was underlined. Since the United Nations agencies involved in development communication follow different ways, there is a further need to harmonize development communication approaches throughout the United Nations system.

127. There is unanimous agreement among participants that training in development communication is crucial. Development communication needs in Africa are essential and urgent. Shortage of trained people in development communication is one of the constraints facing the developing countries. There is also a need for development communication experts in industrialized countries.

128. The need for training packages for communication experts was also reaffirmed. The major thrust of the training package was to identify each agency's concern with communication in general and development communication in particular. Differences in concepts and language used by various United Nations agencies in respect of development communication made co-operation difficult. Participants agreed on the need for better understanding between policy-makers and practitioners.

129. UNESCO is finalizing a global inventory of institutions that provide training in communication and information media. The information on development communication, however, is not distinctly described because development communication is often an amalgam of a number of different courses and seminars, or a part of ad hoc courses.

130. The participants from one specialized agency pointed out that the UNDP guidelines lacked specific reference to communication and that the Project Programme Manual (PPM) is deficient. The problem of communication should be approached at projects, agency, and inter-agency levels.

131. A general conclusion is that short, on-the-job or in-service training for field staff of development agencies should be provided. Training should also be organized by United Nations specialized agencies for their counterparts at the country level. Several separate initiatives are being taken by different agencies. The Round Table was an ideal forum for discussing them, and for trying to introduce some co-ordination.

B. Future Actions to be considered by agencies during the 5th Round Table Conference on Communication for Development:

132. The 5th Round Table conference is scheduled to be held in Sri Lanka in 1994. It will be organized by the Worldview International Foundation, a communication NGO active in Asia. The Inspector proposes that at that conference, United Nations specialized agencies should make decisions on the following:

(a) Whether or not to formally constitute the inter-agency round table; and if so, under which organization.

(b) If the round table is to be so constituted, whether or not the present composition of membership should continue: United Nations specialized agencies (selected, or all); Communication specialists; Private sector; NGOs.

(c) Focus on regions or sub-regions whose communication requirements have not yet been adequately met. The needs have already been identified and regularly updated by a number of agencies.

(d) The place and the agenda for future meetings; identify and agree upon institutions and participants from the regions.

(e) Ways and means of strengthening policies on Communication Programmes for Development establishing standard guidelines, spotting shortcomings and redressing deficiencies.

Annex

The following conclusions can be drawn from the replies to the questionnaire sent to 15 United Nations specialized agencies, out of which 10 responded.

1. Eight organizations have communication programmes performing functions such as industrial and technology information; public information; population education and communication; dissemination of information on development; social and economic issues; education for health programmes; social communication on health; and popular participation.

2. The priority given to communication compared to other programmes is low.

3. Six organizations have allocated general funds for communication; four have not.

4. Seven organizations participated in the Round table Conference (RTC) on Communication for Development.

5. Seven organizations indicated that RTC should be formal; three organizations that it should remain informal.

6. Three organizations indicated that collaboration among organizations of the United Nations system concerned with field activities is adequate, and six that they are inadequate.

7. Eight organizations see possibilities for better use of the existing structure for disseminating information in development programmes.

8. Five organizations indicated that UNESCO can help by extending its mandate to include co-ordination of Communication for Development. Three organizations feel it should not extend its present mandate.

9. Four organizations have participated in IPDC's various programmes.

10. Five organizations see a more effective role for IPDC under various conditions, four feel otherwise.

11. Other views expressed include:

UNFPA: The organization sees the role of information, education and communication (IEC) as one of the key elements of success of population programmes. To maintain support for population goals, UNFPA support governments to have IEC strategies formulated in accordance with the needs of target groups of each country. UNFPA supports IEC plans and programmes,not only in family planning, but also in the advancement of the role and status of women, population resources, environment and development, and the implementation of a country's population policies to deal with population growth, morbidity/mortality, population distribution and migration in accordance with the national development plans and priority designated by the government of each country.

UNDP: In general, development communication could benefit from a more open approach. United Nations and donor agencies, as well as governments, are often reluctant to publicize development failures in their communication programmes. But negative experiences often have important lessons for development. True learning will be enhanced by greater transparency.

UNIDO: The timing of this study is very good. Many organizations are aware of the potential of developments in communications and may be pursuing, at best, parallel or at worst, different but still duplicative directions. Joint action, even when approaching carriers or network providers, can realize great savings in addition to presenting the United Nation's clients with one face for communication.

UNICEF: From some of UNICEF's experiences with mobilizing for broad development objectives, a model for sustainable social action has emerged which responds to some of the critical needs for change perceived by many on both sides of the "donor-beneficiary" divide and in which inter-personal and facilitating communication techniques (as used for example in peer group assessment, analysis and decision-making) play a crucial role. Indeed the facilitating skills required to help groups at various levels seems to UNICEF the most important need and training challenge facing communication in the current environment.

Notes

Part I

1. Communication - a key to human development - FAO, Development Support Communication Branch, 1994, P.24.

2. "Staffing of the United Nations Peace-Keeping and Related Missions (Civilian Component)" (JIU/REP/93/6, P.5, para.24).

3. "World Bank News", Volume XII, No.34, September 1993, P.2.

4. "The Missing Link" a report of the Independent Commission for World-Wide Telecommunication Development set-up by the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in 1982.

5. Communication - a key to human development - FAO, Development Support Communication Branch, 1994, P.3

6. "Working Methods and Procedures: Priority Selection Criteria and Submission Procedures", Intergovernmental Council of the International Programme for the Development of Communication. UNESCO, March 1992, p.3, para.8.

7. "Information in service of humanity", General Assembly document (A/AC.198/1992/L.2), April 1992.

8. "International Training Centre of the ILO", CC.55.3, Fifty-fifth session - Turin, 18 March 1994, p.3.

9. "Staffing of the United Nations Peace-keeping and Related Missions (Civilian Component)".

10. Ibid.

Part II

11. Report of the "Round table on development communication" Rome, 3-6 September 1991, P.7.

12. "International Training Centre of the ILO", CC55/3, Fifty-fifth Session. Turin, 18 March 1994.

13. "Profiles: United Nations Agencies", UNESCO, internal document, p.1.

14. Ibid.

15. "UNESCO activities in the matter of Free Flow of Information and Freedom of Expression" UNESCO. Communication Division Sector of Communication, Information and Informatics, 5 April 1993. Annex I and II.

16. "Review of the General Information Programme, 1977-1987 - A Compilation of Information on its Characteristics, Activities and Accomplishments". UNESCO/PGI/UNISIST, Paris 1988.

17. "An Improved Communication Strategy for ECA", United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 22 December 1993.

18. "Report of the Economic Commission for Africa: Regional Programming, Operations, Restructuring and Decentralization Issues" (JIU/REP/82/1), para.5.

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20. "Guidelines on Communication for rural development", FAO Development Support Communication Branch - Information Division.

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22. "Central America from Conflicts to Human Development". A UNDP document.

23. "The Theory and Practice of Mass Information", text by Alexander Casella, Coordinator for Mass Information. UNHCR, August 1993.

24. Ibid.

25. Quoted from the WHO headquarters comments on the JIU draft report on "Communication for Development Programmes in the United Nations System".

26. "Participatory Development and the World Bank- Potential Directions for Change". 183 World Bank Discussion papers, edited by Bhuvan Bhatnagar and Aubrey C. Williams. 1992.

27. "Annex III Synthesis of the IV Report on the Round-table on Development Communication". Peru, Lima 1993.